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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
INFORMATION REPORT

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COUNTRY Czechoslovakia

SUBJECT Mining in the Trutnov District: Jan Sverma Coal Mines/
Uranium ProductionPLACE ACQUIRED
(BY SOURCE)DATE ACQUIRED
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SOURCE

Location:

2. "Northeast of Trutnov a sizeable new mining and industrial center is under development. The district is located right on the Czech-Polish frontier. Prior to World War II it was known already for several coal mines. These coal mines have recently been greatly expanded. In addition excavation of uranium has started.

Coal Production

3. "The coal mines are concentrated in a national enterprise called JAN SVERMA. Two shafts (Julie and Marie) are in operation in Zacler. A completely new pit was opened up in nearby Černá Voda:
- a) It is said that the coal from the Černá Voda pit is of very high quality and thus suitable for coke production. As there are no installations there yet for coke production this coal is sent from the pit to the central Czechoslovakian cokeries. The Černá Voda coal mine is being constantly deepened. It is said that if proof is found that the coal throughout is of the same good quality a cokery will be constructed there.
 - b) The coal from the Zacler coal mines is also rated high grade. It is transported from Zacler to the Usti Nad Labem area for further chemical processing.

Management

4. "The entire JAN SVERMA enterprise is under one director (fnu) Langer, who is 35. When he was appointed to this post in 1951 or early 1952 the miners were surprised. Langer has not the slightest idea of the coal mining business;

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he used to be a horse butcher. As a very trustworthy Communist he spent about a half year on a special 'manager's' course and is now in charge of coal mines employing between 1,500 to 2,000 persons. His deputy, another Communist, (fnu) Kozeny, is responsible for the technical side of the production. Kozeny might better be called a 'formal' Communist. Another trustworthy Communist, (fnu) Lanceric, watches over the discipline of the coal miners. He was the chairman for Zavodni Rada and is of Ukrainian descent. He came to the area from Carpatho-Ruthenia after World War II.

Labor

5. "The coal miners employed in the JAN SVERMA enterprise include two groups of very young workers:
 - a) About 60 inmates of the compulsory labor camp established in Zacler Castle. The inmates of this camp are completely isolated from the other miners. Even during work they are separated from the free miners.
 - b) Young people attending the special coal miners' school established by the JAN SVERMA management.

Mining School

6. "A miner's course at this vocational school lasts two years. Approximately 80 boys, some of them as young as 14 years, attend this course. They spend more time underground in practical training than in school. Two days a week the young miners are trained in theory. The other four days they must work as helpers in the pits.
7. "In return for their training and maintenance the boys are obliged to stay in the coal mines for at least five years. Even after this period it is quite impossible for them to change over to another trade as they have to go through a labor exchange office. Only under very special circumstances is a transfer to another profession approved.
8. "For their labor in the coal mines the young trainees receive extra payment of 800 Kc monthly. [Note: Prior to currency reform of 30 May 53]. Of this amount only 150 Kc are paid out as pocket money. The rest is put in an obligatory savings account. The trainees may cash money from these accounts only with the special approval of the school management.
9. "Four hours weekly of theory are used for political indoctrination. Membership in the Communist Youth organization CSM is compulsory for all boys in the school. They also must subscribe to the daily paper of this organization.
10. "The head of the school and boarding house is (fnu) Kantur, who is about 30 and a member of the CP. He might be considered a 'formal' Communist as his political lectures are quite mild.
11. "After finishing this school the trainees are sent to work as regular miners. The only difference between younger and older coal miners is that miners under 18 years are granted 24 days yearly vacation. Miners over 18 receive only 18 days yearly. No other special privileges are awarded the young miners.

Wages

12. " [REDACTED] wage varying between 8,000 and 10,000 Kc. About 25% of the crew had these high incomes. The rest earned between 4,000 and 5,000 Kc monthly. To this wage a special free coal allowance was added, amounting to 2,100 kg of coal. At the end of 1952 a new ordinance was issued according to which only one member of a family working in a mine may receive the coal allowance in natura; a second member receives the equivalent in pay. The payment equivalent is calculated at the official coal price, although the free market price is at least twice as high.

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13. [REDACTED] in 1952 when the norms of coal miners' production were raised. According to the report for 1952 the JAZ SVERMA enterprise could only fulfill its production plan by 89%. The situation further deteriorated in early 1953. In the first quarter of 1953, only 70% of the yearly plan could be achieved. In proportion with this decrease the wages were lowered. Many of the coal miners, especially the young ones, tried to resist this reduction. In the winter of 1952-53 some of them were summoned before the public prosecutor in Trutnov who stated that further resistance would be punished by prison. Certain young coal miners were transferred from the district of Trutnov to the M Ostrava coal basin in order to break up the solidarity between friendly groups.

Uranium Production

14. "The value of the entire Trutnov district was markedly increased in March 1952 when a special geological commission from the Jachymov uranium basin discovered traces of uranium near Beckov and Vernerovice (German names: Potschendorf and Wernersdorf). Richer deposits were discovered near Beckov (where prior to World War II a small coal pit had been in operation and where after the war a state-owned estate had been organized). Approximately 400 workers are laboring now in the uranium pits situated on the western outskirts of Beckov. The whole district, which protrudes like a wedge into Polish territory, is now completely isolated. One may enter only with special permission. In Vernerovice the uranium excavation has not yet started. Around 200 technicians and workers are still employed in prospecting activities. The whole uranium production in the Trutnov district comes under the central uranium excavation board in Jachymov. [REDACTED] no information on the value of this uranium. According to rumours the uranium in the Beckov ore is one of the highest grade in all Czechoslovakia.

Polish-Czech Border Conditions

15. "Although the whole district of Trutnov touches on the Polish territory in the north and east, there is no contact at all between the two countries in this area. Strong frontier guard units, especially on the Polish side, watch the border. They send out regular patrols and man observation towers. There are observation towers on the hills opposite Cerna Voda and in the woody Vroni Hori (Rabengebirge). The railway connection between Poland and Czechoslovakia is rarely used. From the Czech side once or at the utmost twice a week a goods train passes into Polish territory. No passenger traffic is in existence. There are no tourist border crossings although there is excellent skiing terrain right beyond the border line."

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